

Jesse Applebury

155 Fox Hollow

Hamilton, MT 59840

Telephone: 406-369-1684

E-mail: jesse@foxhollow.biz

March 1, 2011

Dear Members of the Agricultural Committee,

The passage of HB 515 providing for the basic physical welfare of dogs in our state is an unquestionable must. As Gandhi has said, "The greatness of a nation can be judged by the way its animals are treated."

My recent experience with animals comes from working with Fox Hollow Animal Project, a nonprofit, 501 (c) 3 Montana Corporation. This organization is dedicated to ending pet overpopulation by providing high-volume, high-quality, targeted, affordable sterilization services of companion animals. We provide spay or neuter as a non-lethal solution to homeless, abandoned, and feral animal populations to ensure that euthanasia is no longer an acceptable means of population control.

Our organization has been assisting many of the grassroots breed-specific rescue organizations that are springing up in our state as a result of overpopulating pure breed dogs. I am seeing a common theme in these dogs. These rescue dogs are intact. They often have not been vaccinated or wormed, have umbilical hernias, and males with retained testicles. Often these dogs exhibit "kennelosis." (too much time in a kennel).

Our area has a rescue for Cocker Spaniels that recently took older dogs out of a puppy mill who were no longer being bred but living in small kennels. These dogs were not groomed exhibiting matted hair coats with secondary dermatitis, had untreated otitis externa, and were not sterilized. Some had cherry eyes; some entropion; some retained testicles; and some umbilical hernias.

German Shepherds and Belgian Malinois are more numerous than the rescue in our area can absorb. These dogs are temperamental and not suitable for most homes. The dogs we have seen are plagued with hip dysplasia. We are seeing dogs with metabolic problems that seem not to respond to treatment: for example, insulin resistant diabetes, or chronic diarrhea of unknown cause.

We have seen Grey Hounds with heart worm and ehrlichia. Small breed dogs under the age of 2 years have serious periodontal disease and retained deciduous teeth.

The rescue people are arriving with dogs who have far more medical maladies than our general population of dogs seen at our clinic. Sadly, too, these dogs are tremendously neglected in the affective realm. The personalities often appear flat. The dogs are lacking or far behind in "life experiences." They haven't had chances to run, to

experience freedom, to gain confidence in their abilities, to live.

Some years ago my husband and I took in an older dog from kennel whose business was breeding dogs. This dog was to be euthanasized because she had "loose lips" and was passing that trait along to her offspring. She had a clean, neat, tidy kennel, but she had never been outside its perimeter. Nervous without this security fence, she was always by our side. Hiking in the woods she was unable to cross over a 2 inch stick blocking her way. We even changed her name to see if we could improve her karma. Perhaps her physical needs had been met, but she was sorely neglected in her emotional exposures and her "life experiences."

I feel as human beings we have some responsibility to provide home -- good homes -- to the animals in our communities. When there are more animals than homes, we have a responsibility to cease breeding these animals. Our shelters are full, our rescues are full, our homes are full and yet we continue to encourage more animals to be born.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jesse Applebury". The signature is fluid and stylized, with the first and last names being more prominent than the middle name.

Jesse Applebury